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5 Energy Aides Lauded Despite Security Faults

Five senior Energy Department officials have been identified by congressional investigators as responsible for a serious lack of security at government-owned nuclear plants. Their fate: they have been given achievement medals and generous bonuses.

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of an investigating subcommittee, wrote recently to Energy Secretary Donald P. Hodel to complain: "This is a curious reward and punishment system."

The House investigation was inspired by my report on the inadequacy of security measures at sensitive research facilities that produce defense-related nuclear material. To see how vulnerable the plants were to terrorist attack, I hired a helicopter to fly one of my associates back and forth at low altitudes over the Savannah River nuclear plant in South Carolina. The overflight was never challenged.

Dingell's year-long, secret investigation concluded that DOE officials deliberately misled Congress and the White House regarding se-

curity at the nuclear facilities. Yet five key officials singled out by Dingell's investigators for blame received over \$115,000 in bonuses and merit awards.

How was this possible? Simple enough: internal DOE documents show it was a case of bureaucratic incest in which the officials gave each other the high achievement ratings that won them the awards. My associates Indy Badhwar and Tony Capaccio have seen House documents that identify the five DOE officials, the actions they took that drew congressional criticism and the rewards they received. Dingell's letter identifies them as:

- Herman Roser, assistant secretary for defense programs. According to one report, he was responsible for deep-sixing an independent assessment program conducted by a team of terrorist experts, former CIA and FBI agents and Army commandos that was severely critical of his security measures. He was also accused of misleading a House subcommittee about security at the DOE facilities. Since 1980, Roser has collected more than \$35,000 in bonuses and awards, including one from President Reagan.

- Troy Wade, principal deputy assistant secretary. He was Roser's "point man" who recommended scuttling the embarrassing assessment program. Since 1981 he has received more than \$32,000 in bonuses and

merit awards; he also received a silver medal this year.

- James Culpepper, deputy assistant secretary for security. He was responsible for a report to the president on the status of safeguards at the nuclear plants, a report the General Accounting Office characterized as "misleading." Since 1981 he has won more than \$20,000 in awards.

- Ralph Caudle, director of the Office of Safeguards. He continued to assure Congress that security was adequate when, according to a committee report, "this was not true, as documents in his files clearly indicated." Caudle got a silver medal this year and has received about \$15,000 in awards.

- Robert Morgan, manager of the Savannah River operation. He took part in suppressing the critical security assessment and was accused of misleading Congress about safety at the facility. Last January a new DOE assessment of Savannah River found safeguards to be a "shambles." Since 1981 Morgan has received more than \$26,000 in awards, and this year he was given a gold medal.

The House investigation found some shocking security lapses: sensors and alarms that didn't work; guards who couldn't shoot; guards who, in one exercise, "fired on one another rather than the [mock] attacking force," and a guard unit that responded to a mock attack 16 minutes after the attackers had left.